

# ***Mechanical Memories Magazine***

ISSUE 44

APRIL 2010



*The only UK magazine dedicated to vintage coin-operated amusements  
Now in its fifth year!*

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

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# Editorial

Hello, and here it is at last – the April issue! I did warn you all last month that this would be late, so I hope it comes as no great surprise. I am at least hoping that you will actually receive it in April, although it will be very much on the edge. Having been open at Brighton for the school holidays, it left very little time to produce the magazine, get it to the printers, get it back and in the post. I'm sure you all understand!

Talking of Brighton, it was good to see so many of you over the weekend of the Jukebox Show, particularly some new faces who I met for the first time. Unfortunately, with regard to the show, the general consensus seemed to be that it, like Jukebox Madness, is becoming more of a 50s & 60s retro fair than a jukebox show. I wonder whether we will ever see a return to the Copthorne days – what a great show that was! Anyway, I did wonder whether perhaps some of us could get together and present a big stand at one of these shows, selling machines, spares, promoting the magazine etc. It must surely be more cost-effective for, say half a dozen of us, to club together rather than do it individually. Something to think about for the future?

And finally, the magazine is now in its fifth year – half way to its tenth! Whether or not we see ten years depends very much on your continued support. There are a considerable number of subscriptions due this month, so please get them in as soon as possible, as I'm hoping to have the May issue out in a couple of weeks.

Well, that's about it for now.

Till next time,

All the best

*Jerry*



# News and Coming Events

## Carters at Pinkneys Green

Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, is always a popular ground for Carters Steam Fair, and the forthcoming fair in May will be the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary at this venue. In addition to the full fair, including Meesham's Wall of Death, there will also be a number of Showmans engines in attendance, ensuring that the fair is powered almost entirely by steam. A steam road-run will take place from Maidenhead town centre on the Saturday morning for the opening of the fair, a sight surely not to be missed.

Unfortunately, as I am always in Brighton at the weekends, I rarely get to visit Carters. I had hoped to get to Battersea during their two-week opening in March, but as usual, couldn't find the time. So if any of you visit Pinkneys Green or any other location, please do try to get some pictures for the magazine. If, for some peculiar reason, you don't like steam engines or vintage fairgrounds, don't forget that Carters Vintage Penny Arcade is the biggest travelling in the country, so that alone has to be a good enough reason to visit!

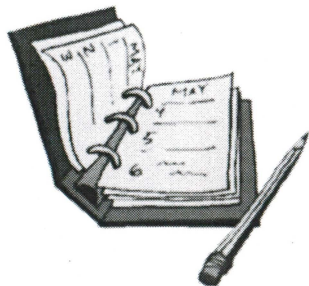
## Vintage Film Night

There is to be a special screening of vintage seaside promotional films at the Walpole Bay Hotel, Cliftonville, on the evening of Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May. The Thanet resorts of Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs etc. will all be featured, and the programme includes the 1919 film 'Magical Margate' which is believed never to have been screened in public before. There will be plenty of vintage Dreamland footage, which should make this a most enjoyable evening. So if you live in the east Kent area, I'm sure it will be well worth a visit. The event is being held in aid of the Margate Shell Grotto. For more information and to order tickets online, go to [www.shellgrotto.co.uk](http://www.shellgrotto.co.uk).



**SEASIDE DELIGHTS**  
**VINTAGE FILM NIGHT**  
Thursday 13 May, Walpole Bay Hotel, Cliftonville





## *Dates for your diary*

**Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale** 28<sup>th</sup> April  
Knightsbridge

**Carters Steam Fair** 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> May  
Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead

**Vintage Film Night** 13<sup>th</sup> May  
Cliftonville, Margate

**Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale** 18<sup>th</sup> May  
Knowle

**Great Dorset Steam Fair** 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> September  
Tarrant Hinton, Dorset

**Jukebox Madness Show** 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> September  
Kempton Park racecourse

**MMM Vintage Slot Collectors' Show & Auction** 28<sup>th</sup> November  
Coventry (Provisional)

**Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale** 7<sup>th</sup> December  
Knowle

Don't forget – if you know of any event which would be of interest to readers of the magazine, please let me know so that I can include details in these pages.

# Dreamland

## MARGATE

### Save Dreamland Update April 2010

The Dreamland project now has its design team virtually in place. Just a few appointments are still to be made and we have a full complement covering project management, quantity surveying, CDM (the safety dimension of design) landscape architect, architect, structural engineer, mechanical & electrical engineer, creative, etc. Co-ordinating this work is project manager Gardiner Theobald.

We are confident we will have the best team for the job and now have to motor hard to hit the end of July deadline for finalised designs not just of the park and ride layouts but of the entranceways, new buildings, landscaping, power distribution, sound & lighting, public circulation, refurbishment of part of the Dreamland Cinema and of course restoration of the Scenic Railway.

The story of Dreamland must be brought alive to its future visitors in new and attractive ways and this will be fundamental to the design thinking. Also the way in which the new Dreamland can play host to a whole range of exciting events and activity that will bring people back time and time again.

The Independent on Sunday (11 April 2010) ran a good feature on the interest in historic amusement parks and rides. It preceded a Southport conference on the subject at which I spoke about the Dreamland project. Dreamland's Scenic Railway was well featured in this article, and BBC Radio 4 did a great piece on Dreamland on its You & Yours programme on Friday 23 April.

We have also appointed a specialist rides coordinator, Bob Preedy. Bob is author of some great books about amusement parks and cinemas, including 'Roller Coasters – Their Amazing History'. It is his task to coordinate the refurbishment and return to operation of the rides. It will be two years before most of the heritage structures will be seen in public but between now and then the present rather unloved amusements will have to undergo a huge refurbishment. First though the rides will have to be brought by road to Kent, stored, X ray-ed, checked and given a schedule of action. Many of the rides are already in the county - having been rescued over the past three years. Others are still to be rescued from storage in defunct amusement parks or packed away for safe keeping by previous owners.

One example is the Corbiere Wheel, built in the mid 50s by a French firm lead by Henri Corbiere. His design was an improvement in the Battersea Funfair structure, manufactured in 1950 up in Leeds. This novel Battersea Big Wheel had the standard rotating chairs, but with a platform which also slowly rotated - giving a 360 degree view

of the surroundings. This wheel did however suffer from a major design fault - the huge forces produced by twin motions proved too great for the side supporting structures. Very soon after opening at Battersea major repairs led inevitably to the wheel only operating in the standard mode. Corbiere's improvement was to give the side structures two separate base fastenings each side, thereby spreading the G-forces around four equidistant points on the ground circle. The Dreamland Corbiere wheel last operated a few years ago at Pleasureland in Southport and has been carefully stored outside Blackpool by the owner whose proper job is head of Blackpool Illuminations.

Other pieces of the ride jigsaw are also still in Blackpool, Southport, Barry and Porthcawl. Eventually all will be here to await expert renovation. This inevitably will brush up against Health and Safety factors, electrical and metal investigations and then finally a stylish reinterpretation of their heritage by a scenic artist.

Bob's other task is to delve into the history of each ride and produce reports on their development through the decades. Most originated in America but Germany was also a creative centre for ingenious and entertaining ideas. John Henry Iles, the owner and main driving force behind the popularity of Dreamland from the early 20s also had a stake in many overseas parks. Here he would have cast his sharp eye around for novelty - and then imported the fresh idea to Margate. This tradition continued long after the Iles era - remember the Orbiter - designed and built in Erith and premiered at Dreamland in the late summer of 1976. So maybe if you have a novel idea for a new ride - perhaps you could once again put Margate at the forefront of entertaining invention.

Historic rides are still being discovered across the country and we will be investigating the feasibility of adding these to our bulging stock. Who knows what will turn up in the next two years - so that the rides of yesteryear can again be given pride of place at one of the country's best loved amusement parks. If you have information on the whereabouts of classic older rides - please do get in touch - we want what you want for the next new and exciting phase of a reinvented Dreamland.

Finally, I just want to get in a plug for a special anniversary celebration which is taking place this month. It is 10 years since Joyland Books was launched as a specialist bookstore for amusement park, fairground, slot machines and seaside books. There is a major celebration of this milestone on amusement park nostalgia website [www.themagic-eye.co.uk](http://www.themagic-eye.co.uk), with articles and contributions from numerous people including the publisher of this very magazine, Jerry.

***Nick Laister***

Chairman, The Dreamland Trust

[www.dreamlandmargate.com](http://www.dreamlandmargate.com)  
[www.savedreamland.co.uk](http://www.savedreamland.co.uk)



# Books about Seaside Piers

One of the most common homes of slot machines past and present is on a seaside pier. Joyland Books stocks a large range of books about piers. Here are some of the best, many of which are now discounted:

## **Birnbeck Pier: A Short History**

by Stan Terrell ~~£3.50~~ £2.93

## **British Seaside Piers**

by Chris Mawson and Richard Riding ~~£19.99~~ £16.99

## **The Grand Pier, Weston-Super-Mare**

by Sharon Poole ~~£12.99~~ £10.71

## **Lancashire's Seaside Piers**

by Martin Easdown ~~£12.99~~ £11.99

## **My Great British Pier Trip**

by Chris Foote-Wood £6.50

## **Piers and Other Seaside Architecture**

by Lynn F Pearson £5.99

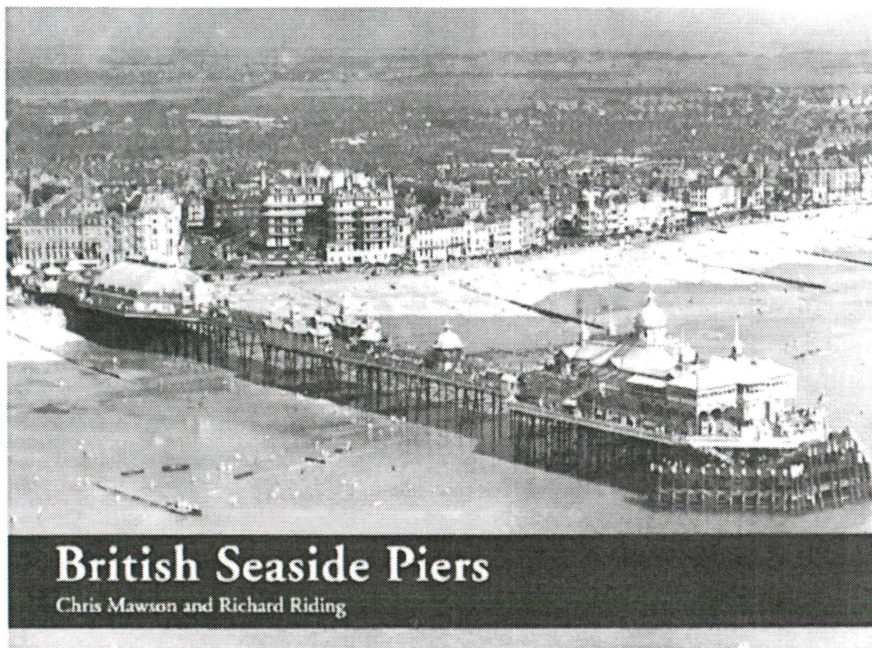
## **Teignmouth Pier: A Pictorial History**

by Viv Wilson £11.99

## **Yorkshire's Seaside Piers**

by Martin Easdown ~~£12.99~~ £11.99

To see our full selection of amusement park, slot machine, seaside and fairground books, visit our website [www.joylandbooks.com](http://www.joylandbooks.com). We also sell several second-hand books about British piers.



## British Seaside Piers

Chris Mawson and Richard Riding

To buy one of these books, please send a cheque for the cost of the book, plus £2.99 postage and packing (99p per additional books), made payable to 'Joyland Books', to:

Joyland Books,  
Southcombe Farm,  
Southcombe,  
Chipping Norton,  
Oxfordshire OX7 5QH



Visit our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations at [www.themagiceye.co.uk](http://www.themagiceye.co.uk)

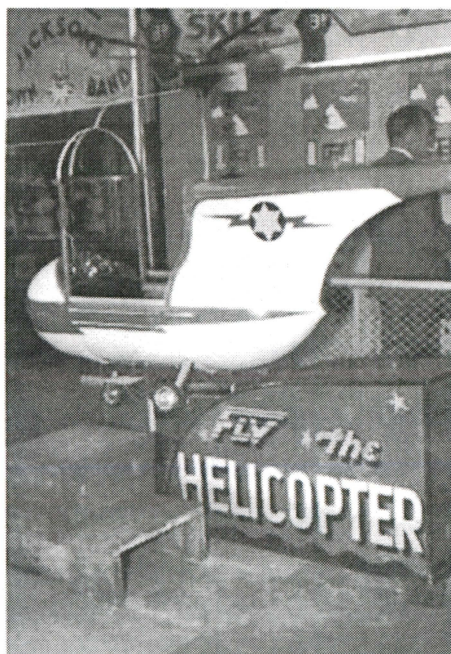


# Kiddie Rides

By Robert Rowland

We all remember (well I hope we do) our childhood holidays at the seaside. For me, once I actually arrived, all I wanted to do was get down into the amusement arcades to play the slots. But most seaside arcades had more than slot machines. What am I talking about? Kiddie rides! One of the largest amusement arcades here in Mablethorpe in the 1960s was called Marine Pastimes. They had just about everything that was available at the time, including a superb collection of kiddie rides, like the Edwin Hall talking Dalek, which was a massive attraction at that time.

These rides were mostly situated at the front entrance, just inside the premises, and most of the rides cost 6d a go (which was a day's spending money in 1966). But these rides were great fun, which is what it was all about. The ultimate thrill as a five year-old to sit in and fly your very own helicopter for a few minutes, or to be moved up and down in an alien flying saucer was magical.





Marine Pastimes is still here today. I got chatting to the current owner recently, and was reminiscing about their now long-gone kiddie rides. Out of the blue he said "I have some photos that dad took in the early 1960s." Five minutes later and there they were, rare stunning images taken in the arcade at the time. We all know that pictures like these do not turn up every day, so I feel proud to share these photos with all MMM readers.

Thinking back, I do remember most of these rides, and to see pictures of them again was wonderful. The Sputnik ride probably had something to do with Russia's Oct 1957 Sputnik 1 launch, so we can possibly date this particular ride around that date.

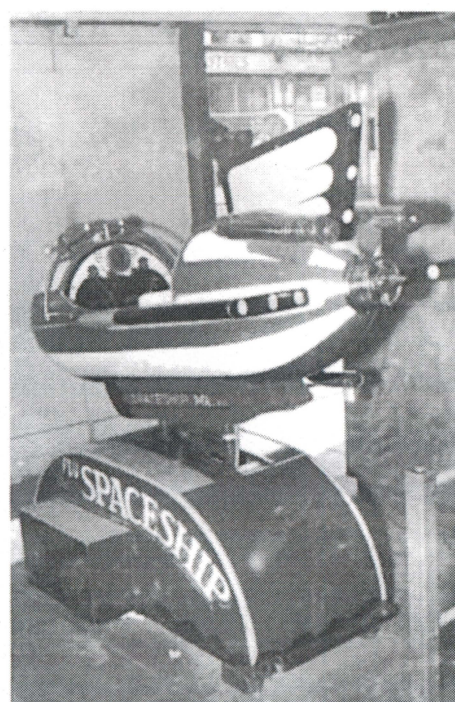
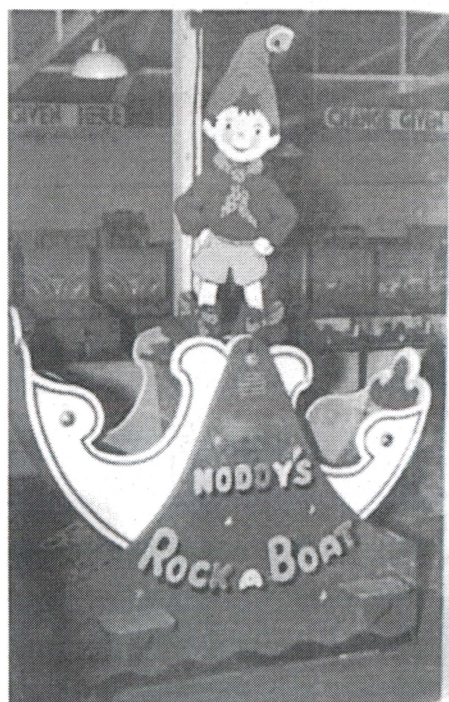
All of you, enjoy these kiddie ride pictures, and I hope they will bring back very happy memories of those great 1960s seaside holidays.

**Robert Rowland**



**Editor's note:** Many thanks to Robert and to the owner of Marine Pastimes for allowing me to publish these pictures (more on the following two pages). I haven't added captions, as I know very little about kiddie rides, and I considered simple comments such as 'horse' 'spaceship' etc. would be rather stating the obvious!











# Ironclad Coincidence

By John Peterson

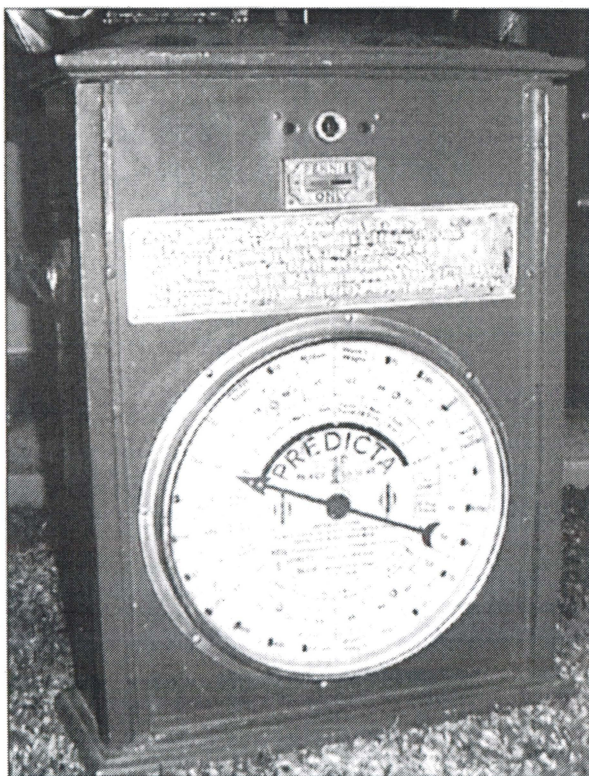
The year is 1939. Germany rolls through Czechoslovakia in two days in March and sets its sights on Poland. Britain and Poland sign a mutual assistance treaty on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1939. The ink is not yet dry on the document when Hitler invades Poland less than a week later. Two days afterward, Britain declares war on Germany. All considered, this is a rather unusual time for the British amusement industry to be introducing new machines. And yet, that was happening.



*John's newly acquired Oracle.*

Today, we're going to take a look at one of the terrific fortune tellers produced by Freddy Bolland and BOLLAND'S AMUSEMENT SUPPLY COMPANY, LTD. of London. The teller is **The Oracle**, or more specifically, the 'ironclad' **Oracle**.

I will admit to some prior experience with Mr. Bolland's ironclad fortune tellers. When I purchased the Glenn Collection out of California in 2002, the sixty games included **Predicta**, another of the 'all weather automatic fortune machines,' to quote the sales brochure featured on page 49 of *Arcades and Slot Machines* by Paul Braithwaite. **Predicta** is an arrow spinning fortune teller. Your large penny deposited falls into a cup-type affair that spins the arrow to reveal your fortune. The fortune wheel has three concentric rings that offer prediction as to: 1) The greatest amount of money you will earn; 2) Age you will live to, and 3) Number of children you will have. Personally, I am more interested in the number of *wives* I will have and the attendant alimony, but that's just me. **Predicta** was predictably boring and I sold the machine after a reasonable stay in my collection. For the record, it returned to the U.K.



**Predicta**, one of three spinning pointer type fortune telling wall machines produced by Bolland's. (The other two being **Gypsy** and **Heaven & Hell**).



Toward the end of 2009, I see **The Oracle** floating across my screen, compliments of Ebay. What is the first thing we do when we see a killer machine come up for auction on Ebay? We write to the seller and ask if he has a 'Sell-It-Now' price. And why do we do this? First, the obvious; if the seller actually has a final number in mind, it might be an opportunity to grab the game at a good price. Secondly, and just as important, it forces the seller to answer the question: Would I sell this now and end the auction early? As a potential purchaser, you want to know if the seller is committed to continuing the auction, regardless of how many mystery lovers are whispering in his ear. To determine the answer, you whisper *first*.

And whisper I did. As it turned out, another party was whispering in his other ear. The seller responded with a nice email querying: What would I offer? To get a better idea of my thought process, it is important to understand that the machine was not working and the seller was not sure the mechanism was complete. Being unfamiliar with the game, I could not tell from the photos either. Having been bitten by missing parts in the past, I was somewhat reluctant to bid 'big' money, but I was going to bid. In preparation, I looked at the auction results in the *Arena* section of my all-time favourite web site, [www.pennymachines.co.uk](http://www.pennymachines.co.uk). In the *Arena*, I found that the wood-cased version of this machine sold for £660, slightly over \$1,000, in May of 2005 at a Southern Counties auction in Salisbury. I could not find an ironclad example having sold at auction for comparison but I figured the iron machine was worth as least as much if not more than its wood cousin.

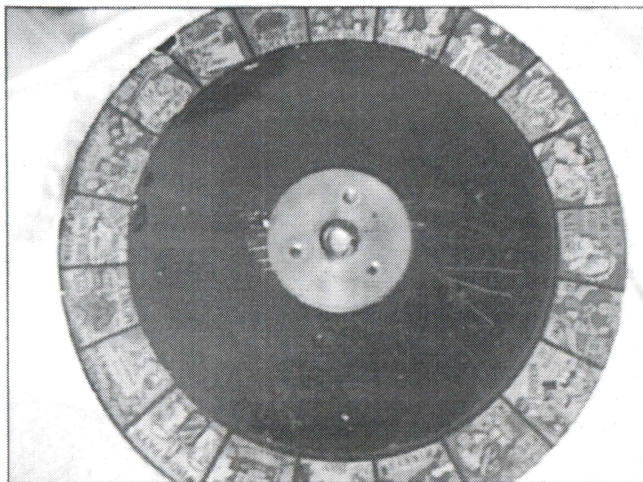
Armed with that information, and the feeling that if I did not make a bid, I would regret it for the rest of my life, I offered \$550 (about £333). The seller kindly answered that the other party had offered \$600. In fairness to both of us, the seller decided that he would add a 'Buy-It-Now' on the auction for \$690, (£418). And so, the auction proceeded with a hard sales price of £418. I agonized over the price and finally decided I would pass it up. And so I did. And the other buyer, the one who offered \$600 to my \$550, snapped up **The Oracle** for £418 in the space of an hour. Once I saw the auction had ended, I wrote one final email to the seller, thanking him for putting the machine up on Ebay and telling him I enjoyed our brief exchange. That was the end of it. Or so I thought.

Three weeks later, out of the blue, I received an email from the seller. He said the purchaser was giving him the run-around regarding payment and he, the seller, was tired of the nonsense. Did I still want the Oracle? If so, he was willing to sell it to me for my original offer price of \$550 - £333, because he and his wife had been impressed with my polite manner in their earlier dealings with me. After picking my jaw up off the ground, it took all of three seconds for me to reply, YES!

When I took possession of the game, I was delighted to find that the machine was complete. Several parts were either unconnected or not properly adjusted. As I do with all my games, I took it completely apart and polished all the parts. Reassembled, the Oracle now dispenses the all-knowing 'Yes' or 'No' to the top 20 pressing questions of life, such as: "Have I Sex Appeal?" or "Will the Little Stranger be a Boy?" **Photo C** is the outer ring with the 20 questions. **Photo D** is the inner ring showcasing the Witch, the

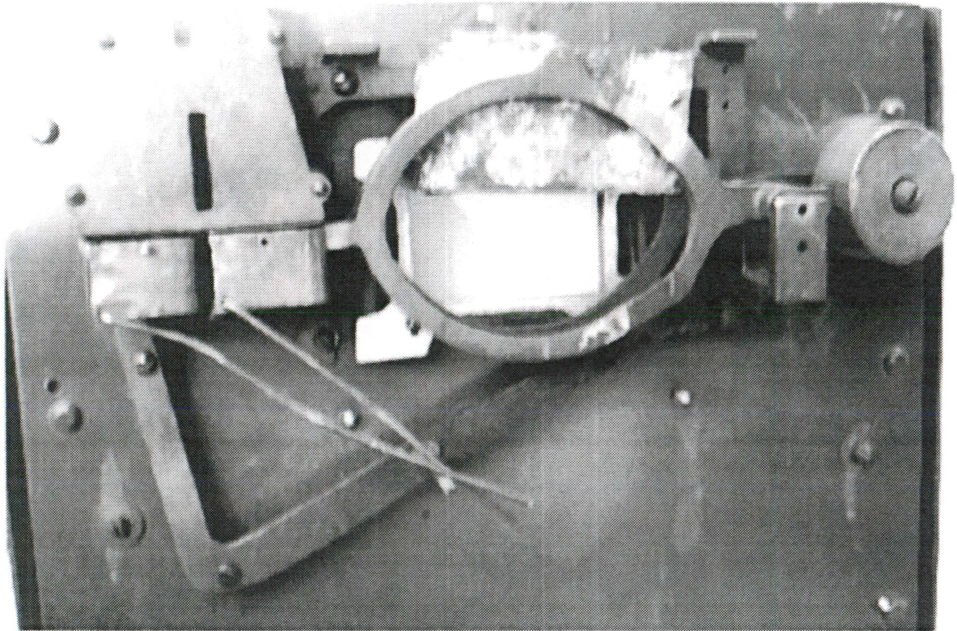


Book of Fate, and the black cat. Both rings rotate together, mated, and you are instructed to turn the large knob in front until your question is under the open window at the top, prior to inserting your large 1D penny.



**Photo C, outer ring and Photo D, inner ring.**

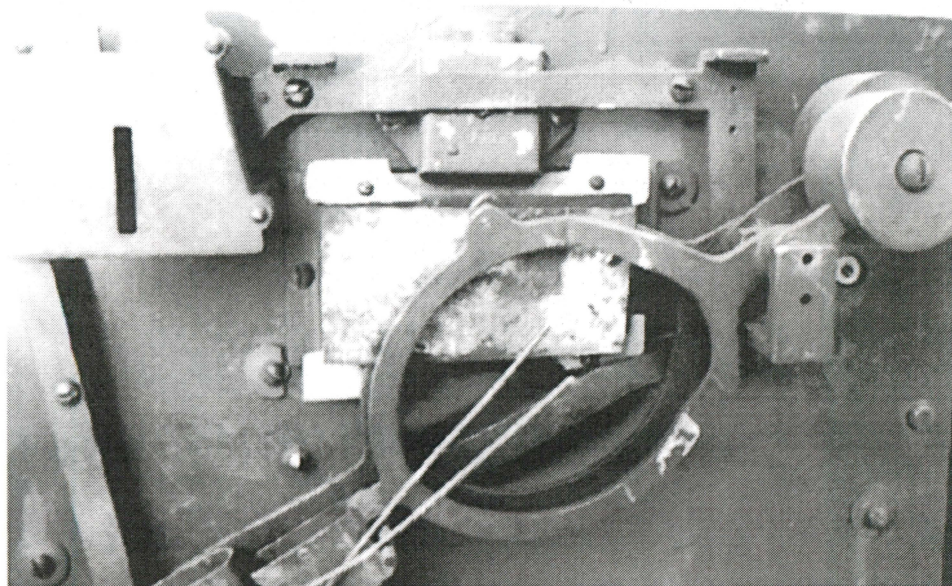
The mechanism is simple, yet clever, **Photo E**. The coin drops down and hits a small peg dead centre at the bottom of the coin slide, just above the two cups. That peg causes the coin to deflect into either the forward cup, which is 'No,' or the rear cup, which is 'Yes.' The mechanism is a counter-balance operation. The weight of the coin is sufficient to cause that specific cup and arm to drop downward. The 'Yes' or 'No' answer is attached to the top-centre of the oval portion of the arm. The answer will appear in the window for about two seconds. **Photo F** is both cups in the down position. You can see the metal square with the answer centred in the display window.



**Photo E**, both cups in the 'up' position.

The only question remaining: How the heck does the arm retract back to the 'up' position, pulling the answer out of view again in preparation for the next coin? What you cannot see is the bottom of the cup, which is open. There is a small metal triangular wedge at the bottom of each cup that is sufficient to reduce the aperture of the cup bottom enough to trap the coin in the cup. See those two brass rods attached, one each to the bottom left side of each cup? Those rods are soldered to that small triangular wedge at the bottom of each cup. When the coin forces the cup to the full down position, the rod rotates that wedge, opening the aperture and allowing the coin to drop out the bottom of the cup. **Photos E** and **F** show the two positions of the cups and the brass rods, full up and full down. Once the coin drops free, the counter-weight is heavier than the cup, forcing the arm with the cup upright and the answer out of sight.





**Photo F**, *both cups in the 'down' position.*

Considering that the Oracle was introduced around 1939, just as the War started for Great Britain, it is amazing that any of these iron monsters survived. Why was this machine not seized and melted down for the war effort? Perhaps it was on location when the war broke out and the operator put it away? Or were arcades considered important to the morale of the citizenry and allowed to continue, unmolested? This is clearly a subject ripe for further exploration.

In the meantime, today's lesson is clear. Be nice to people during your search for these wonderful treasures from our past. Many times, the sellers are truly interested in seeing that the game they have enjoyed for many years now goes to another person who will equally appreciate it. Be polite and respectful. The return to you may be surprising, as it always is to me.

I ask the Oracle, "Am I Psychic?" Oracle answers: "NO – but damn persistent!" Good luck, and good hunting.

**John Peterson, USA**

# Wordsearch

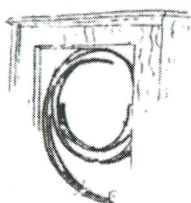
by Stuart Dale

Vintage machine manufacturers – how many can you find?

AHRENS	BOLAND	BOLLAND
BRADLEY	BRENCO	BRENNER
BRYAN	CLEMENT	CROMPTON
HAWTIN	INVICTA	JAMIESON
KRAFTS	MILLS	MUTOSCOPE
PARKER	PEERLESS	STREETS
WALTON	WHALES	WONDERMATICS

E	M	G	F	Q	G	Y	Q	O	B	H	C	Q	W	K	M	O	V	M	K
O	A	U	U	C	F	F	D	L	C	O	J	H	K	S	B	Y	N	D	T
F	A	G	T	Z	R	B	B	P	O	N	A	H	R	P	A	R	K	E	R
A	X	H	Z	O	M	O	E	S	J	J	E	S	D	S	L	L	I	M	D
I	H	C	T	F	S	E	M	H	C	B	Z	R	F	S	R	Q	Y	O	J
E	U	W	C	N	R	C	M	P	Y	O	O	P	B	W	L	I	Z	H	Z
S	O	Q	J	L	E	W	O	V	T	E	K	L	R	F	F	F	P	H	Q
T	M	C	E	A	L	M	F	P	S	O	L	Y	A	G	E	A	V	A	Q
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R	R	L	H	R	B	Q	F	B	C	A	V	Y	Y	R	K	M	G	I	H
T	S	Q	P	R	E	C	D	K	Q	F	C	N	A	W	B	I	W	N	T
S	B	F	Y	W	U	N	H	T	K	T	Q	W	O	T	A	Z	D	D	K
N	N	A	A	A	T	Z	N	B	S	S	X	W	L	S	C	Z	H	M	Q
P	N	A	S	L	A	G	S	E	X	U	J	O	X	G	E	I	O	J	P
A	A	D	K	T	U	H	O	H	R	W	L	I	S	P	C	I	V	Y	J
J	C	M	L	O	L	G	C	W	H	A	L	E	S	S	O	H	M	N	A
S	H	H	X	N	Z	Z	A	H	R	E	N	S	W	C	U	W	K	A	I
I	C	H	S	C	I	T	A	M	R	E	D	N	O	W	O	V	N	G	J
A	M	X	M	P	E	U	G	H	B	O	L	L	A	N	D	O	M	T	D





## ALLWIN TRACK

Grooved & chromed just like the original.

*Inner with flat & nipple*  
17 1/4" inside length  
*Middle* 18" inside length  
*Outer* 40" inside length

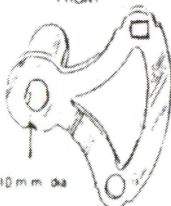


Win Tabs: Red printer on Silver foil sticky backed 12 on a sheet

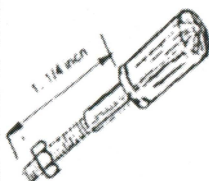


CHROMED 7 ball win gallery. 6 x 1. 9/16

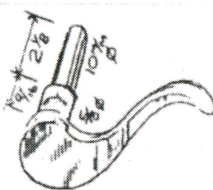
CHROMED TRIGGER FRONT



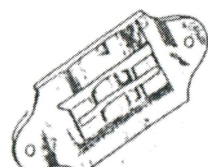
10 mm dia



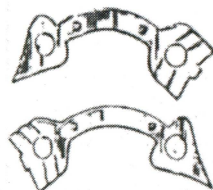
CHROMED THUMB STOP



TRIGGER



COIN SLOT to suit 2p but can be filed bigger



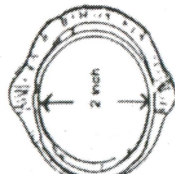
CHROMED ARROWS Reversible.

CHROMED PAYOUT BOWL

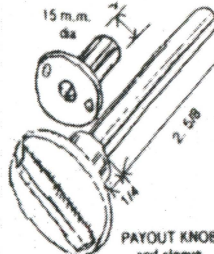


2.5 inch dia cup 2 x 0.25 inch fixing squares at 3.75 inch centres.

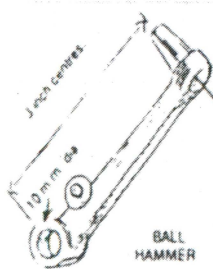
CHROMED KNOB SHIELD



2 x tapped M5 fixing holes on extended nipples 2. 1/2 centres.

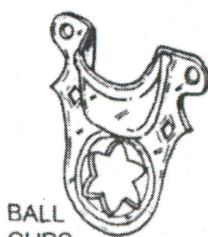


PAYOUT KNOB and sleeve



BALL HAMMER

SPANDRELLS



BALL CUPS

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---

### **Wanted**

Mills Vest Pockets,  
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John 0781 301 5932 (W. Mids)  
Or email [ccfc1968@madasafish.com](mailto:ccfc1968@madasafish.com)

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### **Wanted**

BDR fruit machine and an original stand.  
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Also wanted, Hawtins metal cased allwin or parts for the same.

Dave 07966 438968

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### **Wanted**

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Johnny 01332 363542 (Derby)  
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May swap W.H.Y?

Bill 01642 710834 (Middlesbrough)

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### **Wanted**

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Paul 01278 782714 (Somerset)  
[Paul.vickers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Paul.vickers@hotmail.co.uk)

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### **Wanted**

Jennings Chief cash box.

John 0781 301 5932 (W. Mids)  
Or email [ccfc1968@madasafish.com](mailto:ccfc1968@madasafish.com)

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Peter 07773 052265  
Email [saintmalo40@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:saintmalo40@hotmail.co.uk)



### **Wanted**

Win a Cig. allwin  
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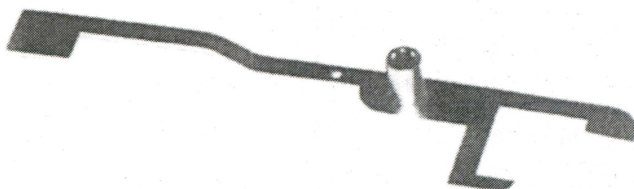
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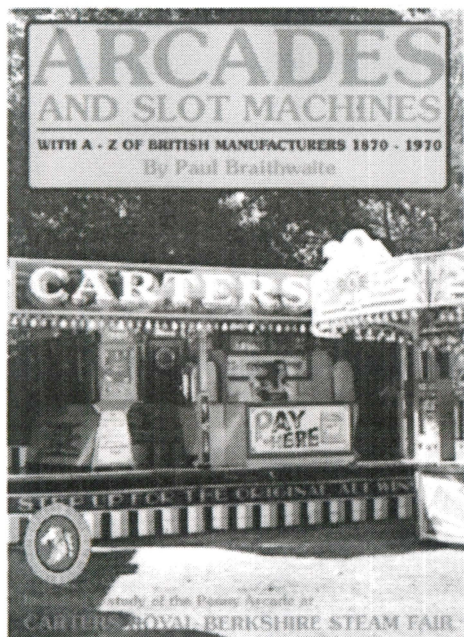


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